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USDA'S REPORT TO CONSUMERS

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE · OFFICE OF INFORMATION · WASHINGTON, D.C. 20250

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No. 30

SHOPPING TIPS

Shop the Ads. You can put extra pennies--even dollars--in your pocket if you read the grocery ads and take advantage of the specials. Home economists at the U. S. Department of Agriculture recently went shopping to test this theory. They were able to save 25 percent by shopping the ads of stores in a single neighborhood. These people are pros, and matching skills with them is a real test. But, the experts say, you should be able to knock off \$1 in \$10 by planning meals around the ads.

June Plentifuls. Raisins, split peas and lentils, canned red salmon and seasonal vegetables--these are the foods to shop for in June. According to the U. S. Department of Agriculture, all should be in plentiful supply.

Chicken Dinner? Here are some tips on buying chicken. Buy it whole and cut it up yourself. You can save from 2 to 4 cents a pound that way. And to get the most meat in proportion to bone, look for U.S. Grade A poultry.

WHAT'S COOKING?

Pork Roasts. The next time you prepare a pork rib or loin roast, set the oven temperature at 325° or 350°F. and cook the meat only until the meat thermometer registers 170°F. It will come out juicy, flavorful and tender. This recommendation, made after 10 years of research by the Iowa Agricultural and Home Economics Experiment Station, knocks down the old theory that an internal temperature of 185°F. is necessary for rib and loin roasts. (The new recommendation does not, however, apply to other pork cuts. Further study is needed to determine the optimum internal temperature of pork shoulders, fresh and cured hams, and chops.)

Timesaving Tip. You can bake meat loaf in less than half the time it ordinarily requires if you press it into muffin pans instead of shaping it into a large loaf.



YARD AND GARDEN

New Hibiscus. Not yet available--but only a few years away--is a new hibiscus that is more resistant to insects than most other varieties. It's called the Vulcan, and it's a product of the National Arboretum. The Vulcan is a semi-tropical shrub with heavy, leathery red flowers. The brilliant red petals are ruffled at the edges and have gold undersides. Plants have already been released to nurserymen for propagation. They should be available to the public in 2 or 3 years at the most.

Mail-Order Seeds. Those seeds you bought by mail--are they as good as the advertisements claim? They aren't ordinarily inspected under the Federal Seed Act, so consumers actually have no way of knowing whether or not the seeds live up to the standards of the law. Yet, in spot-checks by the U. S. Department of Agriculture, most mail-order seeds were above government standards. In all, 310 samples of vegetable seeds from 28 companies were tested. Ninety-three percent were better quality than required by law.

When to Water. The time to water your lawn is when the grass starts to wilt. Then soak it good, say soil scientists at the U. S. Department of Agriculture. If, however, you haven't this choice--and must water on a schedule--do it twice a week. This works best in most areas, including the more arid climates, the researchers find. It also works well on both loam and sandy loam soils.

New Look for Asparagus. Don't be concerned if next spring--or maybe the spring after that--your nurseryman tries to sell you asparagus plants with their roots chopped to about 4 inches. Asparagus has gone high-fashion. The U. S. Department of Agriculture finds all those long dangling roots are unnecessary. Asparagus will grow just as well with its roots cut short. And, trimming makes the asparagus easier to handle, easier to pack, less costly to ship.

RESEARCH REPORTS

Emulsion for Intravenous Feeding. Hospital patients who must be fed intravenously for long periods may some day have a more efficient feeding process. It comes, surprisingly enough, from the U. S. Department of Agriculture, where scientists have developed a high-calorie, fat emulsion that overcomes one of the major problems of long-term intravenous feeding--loss of weight by the patient. The new emulsion, made from cottonseed oil, provides up to 8 times as many calories as currently used carbohydrate solutions. It is clear, colorless and odorless. The emulsion has already been used successfully with laboratory animals. It now needs to be clinically evaluated.

Every Little Bite Helps. It's a big job and they are little bugs, but the flea beetles imported by the U. S. Department of Agriculture in 1964 to eat up the alligator weeds that clog southern waterways are doing their best. So far, however, they've made hardly a dent in the 600 acres of weeds that fill marshes and ponds along the Georgia-South Carolina border. Other beetles, transported to Jacksonville, Fla., last fall, ate up an acre of weeds. But this year more weeds came up, and the beetles have had to start over again. It's still too early to say whether or not they've bitten off more than they can chew. USDA scientists still hope that these weed-loving bugs would do the job of a herbicide--and thus minimize the potential hazard to fish and wildlife.

HOUSE AND HOME

Keep It Cool. Building a new house? Then pick its place carefully. You can make a house considerably cooler in the summer by protecting it against the rays of the sun. Proper placement will also reduce the cost of air conditioning. According to housing specialists at the U. S. Department of Agriculture, here are some things you should plan for: (1) A house that faces north and south; (2) A light-colored, high-pitched roof; (3) Roof overhangs; (4) Louvers or bar screens; (5) Awnings; (6) Venetian blinds; (7) Shade trees. One other thing, keep concrete and blacktop areas away from the house. If nearby, they'll reflect and reradiate solar heat into your house.

SYMBOL

Meet Pestina. Have you met Pestina? She's a coquettish, hitchhiking bug that really gets around. You may have seen her on the agricultural quarantine notices distributed by airlines, steamship companies and travel agents. Up to now she's been nameless. No longer. A nationwide contest has named her Pestina. And she's become the symbol of all the many foreign agricultural pests that could sneak into this country to damage U. S. crops, trees, flowers, birds and animals. So should you be traveling abroad this summer, watch out for Pestina and her friends. Don't bring them back with you.

COMMUNITY ACTION

Whittling Away Their Time. As long as anyone can remember, the rural people of Hardy and Mineral Counties, West Virginia, have been carving things out of wood. But no one ever paid them for it. It took representatives of the U. S. Department of Agriculture to turn their hobby into an income-producing business. With USDA help, the community obtained a grant from the Office of Economic Opportunity--to pay for a market research study, develop models, recommend the necessary equipment and materials. Already one company has offered a contract. Three adjoining counties have joined in. If yours is a low-income area and you want to do something to help, contact your local rural areas development or war-on-poverty organization. If there is no such group in your area, write to the Rural Community Development Service, Washington, D. C., 20250. They can give you ideas and tell you how to get a project started.

We Call It Greenspan. It's a park. It's a picnic area. It's a wildlife habitat. It's Greenspan, a new program of the U. S. Department of Agriculture that helps communities buy land for recreation and scenic uses. -- Newark, N. Y., a town of 10,000 located halfway between Syracuse and Rochester, is the first to try it. Newark is buying 30 acres of cropland for a city recreation area which will feature a wildlife pond, picnic grounds, ball diamonds, ice skating rink, badminton courts and covered pavilion. If you'd like to know more about Greenspan and what it can do for your community, call your County Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service office. It's listed in the phone book under U. S. Department of Agriculture.

ON THE FARM

Midnight Snack--for Cows? You're not the only one who likes a midnight snack. Cows do, too, U. S. Department of Agriculture scientists report. In fact, cattle do more than snack at night. They do one-fourth of their eating between sunset and dawn.

THINGS TO WRITE FOR

Ann's Additive Story. "Ann's Additive Story" is an informative color slide program on food additives. It tells how--through the cooperation of government and industry--the food you eat is made more nutritious, why it tastes better, looks more attractive and lasts longer. It is a story as close to you as your family's refrigerator, and as important as its health. Copies of this slide set may be purchased from the Photography Division, Office of Information, U. S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C., 20250. The cost: \$5.50. Or, if you prefer a filmstrip, write to Photo Lab, Inc. 3825 Georgia Avenue, N.W., Washington, D. C., 20011. Filmstrips cost \$5 each.

America the Beautiful. Fifty-two full-color prints, representing the natural beauty of each of the states plus Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands, are now available from the Government Printing Office. They are excellent reproductions of colored photos taken by the U. S. Department of Agriculture. The pictures are ideal for framing and hanging in homes, schools, offices, and business establishments. Each picture is 15 by 20 inches printed on 20 by 24-inch paper. They sell either singly or as a set--10 cents each or \$5.00 for all 52. Send your order to the Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing Office, Washington, D. C., 20402. When ordering single copies, be sure you name the state picture you wish.

Three-Bedroom House Plan. Here's a house plan that offers the builder a choice of exteriors. He can have (1) unit masonry walls with a concrete slab floor; (2) brick veneer over a wood frame with a concrete slab floor, or (3) conventional wood framing with a wooden floor over a crawl space. The house itself is suitable for farm, suburb or city. It has 1,120 square feet of floor space, with the rooms arranged so they can be changed to suit family needs. If you'd like to have this plan--or more information about it--write to the Extension agricultural engineer at your state university. Ask for Plan 7167. There usually is a small charge.

Farm Vacations. It was his first time on a farm, and he wanted to milk a cow. The farmer didn't object because the youngster was there for just that reason--to have fun on the farm, to learn about the animals, to get out in the sun, in the fresh air. It wasn't until he asked, "Which faucet do I pull to get chocolate milk?" that the farmer realized how much this small city slicker didn't know about farm life. If your children have never seen a cow, a pig, a lamb--except in books and movies, take them on a farm vacation this summer. For a list of addresses of organizations and state agencies that offer farm vacation directories, send a postcard to: Special Reports Division, Office of Information, U. S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C., 20250.

FOOD FACTS

The Food We Eat. Food consumption this year is expected to remain about the same as last year or perhaps edge up slightly, the U. S. Department of Agriculture reports. This is a reversal of last year's decrease of 1 percent.

SERVICE is a monthly newsletter of consumer interest. It is designed for those who report to the individual consumer rather than for mass distribution. For information about items in this issue, write: Jeanne S. Park, Editor, SERVICE, Office of Information, U. S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C., 20250.